OUTGOING TELEGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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FORM DS 322(OCR) F770004-0095

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ARA/PAF:GDWALLACE:STC
8/10/70 EXT. 29206
ARA/PAF:DCPROPER

ARA/APU:DWCOX (INFO) | ARA/APU:TRAGEN (INFO)
AA/LPA/IS:VWILBER (INFO)

IMMEDIATE MONTEVIDEO

ROUTINE ALL ARA DIPLOMATIC POSTS, RULPAL/USCINCSO

SUBJECT: SPOKESMAN ON MITRIONE ASSASSINATION AT MONDAY'S PRESS BRIEFING

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SPOKESMAN MCCLOSKEY SAID:

QUOTE: ANTICIPATING YOUR INTEREST IN TRAGIC DEATH OF DAN MITRIONE, IN MONTEVIDEO, YOU HAVE SEEN OR YOU SHOULD SEE STATEMENT ISSUED BY WHITE HOUSE EARLIER THIS MORNING.

WE HAVE ALSO MADE AVAILABLE, EARLIER, A STATEMENT BY SECRETARY ROGERS AND I NOW HAVE AVAILABLE THE STATEMENT BY DR. JOHN HANNAH, ADMINISTRATOR FOR AID. WE HAVE COPIES OF THAT AVAILABLE IN MY OFFICE.

DETAILS, AS WE KNOW THEM, COINCIDE LARGELY WITH WHAT HAS BEEN REPORTED PUBLICLY. HIS BODY WAS IDENTIFIED BY MEMBER OF EMBASSY STAFF. IT WAS FOUND IN ABANDONED, AND PRESUMED STOLEN, CAR IN MONTEVIDEO SHORTLY AFTER 4:30 A.M. LOCAL TIME -- WHICH WOULD BE 5:30 HERE.

I THINK YOU HAVE PROBABLY ALSO SEEN STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT OF URUGUAY, AND AMBASSADOR CHARLES ADAIR HAS RECEIVED REGRETS OF THE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH FOREIGN MINISTER JORGE PEIRANO FACIO.

WELL, IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE WHAT ELSE TO SAY ON AFTERMATH OF THIS TRAGEDY -- KEEPING IN MIND THAT AN AMERICAN CITIZEN -- ANOTHER AMERICAN CITIZEN -- IS STILL HELD, AND WE HAVE NO WORD ON WHAT TO EXPECT THERE.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MRILL

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Continuation Sheet

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THROUGHOUT ALL OF THIS, USG, THROUGH EMBASSY IN MONTEVIDEO MAINTAINED CLOSE CONTACT WITH GOU, AND WE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO DO EVERYTHING PRACTICABLE TO EFFECT RELEASE AND SAFE RETURN OF MITRIONE. AND TO SAY THE OBVIOUS, THAT EFFORT ALONG THOSE LINES WILL CONTINUE SO LONG AS MR. FLY IS HELD.

QUESTION HAS BEEN RAISED AS TO WHETHER WE PRESSED GOU TO MEET ALL OF DEMANDS OF THE CAPTORS.

WE DID NOT, LITERALLY DO THAT, AND OUR REASONING IS THAT IF WE PRESS GOVERNMENTS TO ACCEDE TO SUCH EXTREME DEMANDS, THAT WOULD SERVE, IN OUR VIEW, ONLY TO ENCOURAGE OTHER TERRORIST GROUPS TO KIDNAP AMERICANS WITH EXPECTATION THAT IF THEY HAVE AN AMERICAN PRISONER USG WILL SUPPORT DEMANDS OF KDI**IDNAPPERS AGAINST HOST GOVERNMENT. SUCH POLICY WOULD CARRY WITH IT GREAT RISKS FOR ALL AMERICANS OVERSEAS, AND IT MIGHT BE WELL TO NOTE THAT GOU IN THIS MATTER CONSIDERED REAL PURPOSE OF KIDNAPPERS WAS NOT RELEASE OF PRISONERS THAT THEY DEMANDED, BUT WEAKENING OF URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT AND POSSIBLE DESTRUCTION OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN URUGUAY BY MAKING DEMANDS WHICH COULD NOT BE MET. UNQUOTE.

Q: (NYTIMES) STORY FROM MONTEVIDEO THIS MORNING SAID UNITED STATES AND BRAZIL PRESSED GOU TO CHANGE ITS POLICY OF NOT NEGOTIATING AT ALL WITH GUERIAL**LLAS. IS THAT AN ACCURATE STATEMENT?

A: TO MY KNOWLEDGE, IT WOULD NOT BE.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING MORE THAT CAN BE DONE NOW THAT HASN'T BEEN DONE BY USG WITH GOU THAT IS CONTEMPLATED TO PROVIDE AT LEAST RELEASE FOR SECOND AMERICAN?

A: NO, I WOULD NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO SUGGEST OR PROPOSE, OTHER THAN WE MAINTAIN CLOSE AND CONTINUING CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT IN THE HOPE THAT IT WILL EXERCISE WHAT IT CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE EFFORT. WE ARE, AGAIN TO SAY OBVIOUS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT AMERICAN CITIZENS, WHETHER THEY ARE EMPLOYESS OF USG OR NOT, WHO FIND THEMSELVES IN THESE SITUATIONS. WE HAVE TALKED THIS MATTER OVER HERE ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS IN PAST, AND I THINK THERE IS, OR I HOPE THERE IS, SOME RECOGNITION THAT THERE MAY ALWAYS BE LIMITS ON WHAT GOVERNMENT -- OR HUMANS -- CAN DO IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS.

Q: IS USG SATISFIED URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT DID, IN FACT, DO EVERYTHING PRACTICABLE IN MITRIONE CASE?

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A: WELL, I WANT TO STOP SHORT OF AN ABSOLUTE CONCLUSION, AND I'M NOT IMPLYING RESERVATION EITHER. WHAT I HAVE IN MIND IS: WE MAY NOT KNOW EVERYTHING THAT GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTED TO DO. BUT I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT WE DO BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS SERIOUS IN ITS EFFORTS, PATIENT, AND HAD IN ITS MIND WELFARE OF AMERICANS BEING HELD. AND I INCLUDE ALSO I SUPPOSE I SHOULD, THE BRAZILIAN DIPLOMAT.

Q: DO YOU KNOW OF SIMILAR INSTANCES IN PAST WHERE UNITED STATES HAS ASKED FOR RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD IN ORDER TO EFFECT RELEASE OF AMERICAN DIPLOMATS?

A: LET ME GO ON BACKGROUND HERE. I WOULD THINK IT NOT CORRECT THAT WE HAVE URGED A GOVERNMENT TO MEET EVERY DEMAND OF ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THIS. WE DO TAKE POSITION THAT GOVERNMENTS TO WHOM EMPLOYEES OF THIS GOVERNMENT ARE ACCREDITED AND WITH WHOM THEY WORK DO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROTECTION OF OUR PEOPLE ASSIGNED ABROAD. WE TAKE THAT MATTER VERY SERIOUSLY HERE. BUT I WANT TO KEEP IN BACK OF MY MIND THAT ONE CAN'T RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT WE WOULD FACE SIMILAR SITUATIONS.

Q: IS THIS A PURELY LATIN AMERICAN PHENOMENON? AND IF SO, IS GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING ANY SPECIAL POLICY SUCH AS THINNING OUT NUMBERS OF AMERICAN OFFICIALS IN LATIN AMERICA BECAUSE OF THIS SITUATION?

A: I WOULDN'T WANT TO TRY TO TAKE THIS TOO FAR INTO THE FUTURE. BUT AT LEAST AS OF NOW, THERE HAS BEEN NO DECISION TO THIN THE RANKS FOR THIS ONE REASON. I THINK MOST OF THE PEOPLE, AT LEAST IN MY EXPERIENCE -- SO I HAVE TO SPEAK PERSONALLY HERE AND NOT INSTITUTIONALLY -- IN THE MIXTURE OF AGENCIES WHO CONDUCT AMERICAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS ABROAD, GO ABROAD WITH THE REALIZATION THAT THIS KIND OF THING CAN HAPPEN. IT IS NOT CONFINED EXCLUSIVELY TO LATIN AMERICA. ONE OF OUR DIPLOMATS WAS DETAINED RECENTLY IN JORDAN ALONG WITH SOME OF YOUR COLLEAGUES, AT A HOTEL IN AMMAN -- I FORGET THE NAME OF IT.

Q: THERE WAS A STORY ALSO THIS MORNING, SAYING THAT SOME AMERICAN DEPENDENTS WERE BEING EVACUATED FROM MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY. DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THAT?

A: NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING IN OUR TRAFFIC ON THAT. NO.

Q: DID MR. MITRIONE HAVE ANY KIND OF DIPLOMATIC OR OFFICIAL -- OFFICIAL OR DIPLOMATIC STATUS?

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A: WELL, HE DOUBTLESS HELD AN OFFICIAL PASSPORT, BUT HE --

Q: BUT HE WOULD NOT HAVE A DIPLOMATIC --

A: PERHAPS NOT -- AND I WOULD THINK NOT A DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT. BUT I WOULD WANT TO SAY HOWEVER THAT OUR CONCERN THERE WOULD NOT BE SEPARATED ON MATTER OF WHETHER HE HAS A BLACK PASSPORT OR AN OFFICIAL ONE.

Q: FROM TIME TO TIME THERE ARE REPORTS THAT UNITED STATES IS STRENGTHENING SECURITY OF THE DIPLOMATS ABROAD. HAS THIS BEEN A FACTOR OF CONSIDERATION?

A: YES, INDEED. WE HAVE TRIED A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT PROCEDURES WHICH I THINK IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO DETAIL ON THE PUBLIC RECORD -- AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT NEW MEASURES WILL BE SOUGHT AS A RESULT OF THIS INCIDENT.

Q: HAS THE MACOMBER STUDY COMMITTEE COMPLETED ITS WORK?

A: YES, BY AND LARGE. MR. MACOMBER WENT TO THE HILL -- I THINK SIX WEEKS OR TWO AND A HALF MONTHS AGO, TO REPORT TO ONE OF THE COMMITTEES. BUT THIS HAS TO BE A CONTINUING PROCESS, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

Q: THIS EXPLANATION OF THE U.S. POSITION IN THIS CASE, WOULD MEAN THAT USG WOULD ALWAYS ASK A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT TO DO EVERYTHING PRACTICABLE, BUT NOT NECESSARILY EVERY THING POSSIBLE. THAT WOULD BE THE GUIDING RULE -- "EVERYTHING PRACTICABLE."

A: I WOULD THINK THAT COMMON SENSE WOULD BE -- EVERYTHING PRACTICABLE --

Q: BECAUSE IT WOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO ACCEDE TO THESE DEMANDS -- BUT IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PRACTICABLE, IN YOUR VIEW?

A: FOR BACKGROUND, THAT WOULD BE OUR VIEW.4

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